(b) if so, the details thereof and action taken against the officers concerned;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Indian Navy incurred a loss of several lakhs of rupees on account of procurement of substandard equipments for air conditioning plant in the logistic department; and

(d) if so, what action has been taken against the officials concerned?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) It is a fact that during 1993—1995, the Naval Headquarters had authorized Material Organisation Visakhapatnam to procure spares through Indian trade (ship chandler purchase).

A majority of the ships and submarines based at Visakhapatnam, acquired between 1967—1991, were of Soviet Union origin. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union (in August 1991), there was a breakdown in the supply of spares and components for these Soviet origin Naval Platforms. This was due to the non availability of information about the Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM) in the erstwhile Soviet Union.

Before the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the Navy's requirements of spares and components were being routed through two Soviet Government channelising agencies i.e., General Engineering Department (GED) and General Technical Department (GTD). The Indian Navy did not have a sufficient data base about the market prices of Soviet supplies, as before 1991 these were supplied on Friendship Prices', by GET/GTD.

Allegations of malpractices against ship chandler purchase were received by Naval Headquarters. These allegations were examined by the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) and also investigated by the CBI. However, no malafide in such purchases was established and the case was closed by the CBI.

During November 1995 an Indian Naval Ship had reported failure of air conditioning equipment whilst at sea. A Board of Inquiry was thereafter convened to investigate the allegation of procurement of substandard AC chillers. The Board of Inquiry did not establish any nexus and consequent malafide intent on part of the concerned individuals.

Re-examination of one-rank-one pension proposal

804. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to re-examine the issue of one-rank-one pension to ex-servicemen; and

(b) if so, the steps taken in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A Group of Ministers has been constituted to look into this issue.

Increase in infiltration in J&K

805. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that after the pull out of military from Jammu and Kashmir there has been a spurt in infiltration from Pakistan side;

(b) if so, the details of incidents of infiltration since December, 2004; and

(c) the steps being taken to stop infiltration from other side of border in Jammu and Kashmir?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) There has been no spurt in filtration from Pakistan side after the pull out of military from Jammu and Kashmir. However, infiltration attempts by terrorists from Pakistan Occupied Kashmir/Pakistan continue.

(c) Adequate measures have been taken to intercept and eliminate terrorist groups attempting to infiltrate in Jammu & Kashmir. The measures include surveillance of all known routes of infiltration including deployment of unattended ground censors, construction of a fence along the Line of Control (LoC) and multitiered deployment of troops. Also the Government has been continuously emphasizing to Pakistan not to permit any territory under its control to be used to support terrorism in any manner.

Indian Soldiers in Pakistani Jails

†806. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of Indian soldiers detained in Pakistani jails;

(b) the offence for which these soldiers have been detained; and

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.